

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-11 SAM-01 /074 W

----- 087500

O P 140405Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2224

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, MY

SUBJ: HEALTH OF PRIME MINISTER RAZAK

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 221

1. JAN 13 ACTING PM ISSUED BRIEF STATEMENT: "DUE TO UNFORE-
SEEN CIRCUMSTANCES, THE PRIME MINISTER'S ARRIVAL IN KUALA
LUMPUR SCHEDULED FOR JAN 14 HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER
NOTICE." GOVT INFLUENCED "NEW STRAITS TIMES" (NST) ON JAN 14
CARRIED LONDON DATELINED REPORT THAT, ACCORDING RELIABLE
SOURCES, PM RAZAK LEAVING LONDON JAN 14 FOR CONVALESCENCE
IN SOUTHERN FRANCE. STORY NOTED THAT, ALOUGH RAZAK HAD
BEEN ADMITTED LONDON CLINIC DEC 22 AND DISCHARGED AFTER WEEK
OF OBSERVATION AND TESTS, HE WAS READMITTED CLINIC JAN 11
WITH A FEVER, AND "TESTS WERE IMMEDIATELY CARRIED OUT BY

SPECIALISTS." ACCORDING REPORT: FOREIGN MINISTER

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RITHAUDDEEN AND CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT KADIR

SHAMSUDDIN FLEW TO LONDON FROM KUALA LUMPUR JAN 13, IMMEDIATELY VISITED PM, THEN TELEPHONED DETAILS TO ACTING PM HUSSEIN ONN. REPORTER NOTED OWN CONVERSATION WITH PM JAN 9, WHEN "HE SOUNDED BOUYANT" AND WAS TO HAVE RETURNED KUALA LUMPUR JAN 14. NST NOTED THAT THERE WAS SHARP DROP IN PRICES ON K.L. AND SINGAPORE STOCK EXCHANGES WHEN DATUK HUSSEIN'S STATEMENT RELEASED HERE AT 1:00 P.M,

2. JAN 14 EDITIONS MALAY LANGUAGE PRESS IN KUALA LUMPUR FRONTPAGED STORY BUT DID NOT PLAY IT AS LEAD ITEM. "BERITA HARIAN" COVERAGE SIMILAR TO THAT OF NST WHILE "UTUSAN MALAYSIA" CARRIED BRIEF AP ITEM DATELINED LONDON JAN 13 CITING MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSION SPOKESMAN TO EFFECT THAT TUN RAZAK "CURRENTLY IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO KUALA LUMPUR IN TWO OR THREE DAYS TIME." UTUSAN MELAYU" AND CHINESE LANGUAGE "SIN CHEW JIT POH" ALSO DOWNPLAYED STORY, PROVIDING LITTLE BEYOND TEXT OF HUSSEIN ONN'S STATEMENT.

3. COMMENT: THE DIRECT CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE NST STORY FROM LONDON OF RAZAK'S CONVALESCENCE IN FRANCE AND THE AP REPORT CARRIED IN UTUSAN QUOTING MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSION SOURCES THAT HE WILL BE RETURNING SHORTLY IS INTRIGUING SINCE WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT SP'S LONDON STORY WAS SOLICITED BY THE NST THROUGH THE AP CORRESPONDENT HERE. FURTHERMORE, EMBASSY HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT AP'S REPORT THAT HE IS STILL UNDERGOING MEDICAL EXAMINATION IN LONDON IS THE CORRECT ONE AND WE CANNOT CONCEIVE WHY THIS MOST RECENT FICTION OF A TRIP TO FRANCE WAS CONCOCTED. CERTAINLY, IT WILL DO NOTHING TO STILL THE INTENSE RUMOR MONGERING THAT REACHED ITS PEAK YESTERDAY (JAN 13) WITH THE REPORT THAT RAZAK HAD DIED. POSSIBLY RAZAK MIGHT IN FACT BE SO ILL THAT HE CANNOT RESUME THE PREMIERSHIP AND THE EFFECT DATUK HUSSEIN'S ASSUMPTION OF POWER WOULD HAVE ON A NUMBER OF AMBITIOUS POLITICIANS TIED TO RAZAK COUPLED WITH STRONG RUMORS RAZAK WOULD ANNOUNCE CABINET CHANGES UPON HIS RETURN CAN BE EXPECTED TO KEEP POLITICAL POT BOILING HERE UNTIL SOME CREDIBLE REPORT IS RECEIVED REGARDING THE TUN'S CONDITION.
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UNDERHILL

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Type: TE
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